



City of Coral Gables
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
August 27, 2024

ITEM TITLE:

A Resolution accepting a proposal concept from artist Morel Doucet and approving the fabrication and installation of the sculpture “Secrets That the Wind Carries Away”, (unanimously recommended by the Arts Advisory Panel, approval/denial vote: 6 to 0, and the Cultural Development Board approval/denial vote: 5 to 0); authorizing the City Manager or his or her designee to negotiate an agreement with the artist; authorizing an amendment to the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 amended budget to recognize as revenue a transfer of \$110,000 from the Art in Public Places reserve, and appropriating such funds to put toward the infrastructure cost and related expenses regarding the artwork.

BRIEF HISTORY:

The City Commission has consistently expressed interest in building the City’s permanent public art collection with artworks by prominent artists representing a diversity of backgrounds and disciplines.

On September 13, 2023, the City Commission passed Resolution 2023-244 approving artists to submit proposals for a commemorative public artwork aligned with the city’s centennial to honor Bahamian and Black residents. Resolution 2023-244 further approved \$30,000 for the proposal process and \$500,000 for the artwork design, fabrication, and installation, for a total of \$530,000.

Ten pre-approved artists were invited to participate in a site visit and met with residents and decedents being commemorated. Artists were provided with additional research materials and historical documents, including responses to requested feedback about the project.

Eight of the ten artists submitted proposals, which were shared with the community and available for viewing on the city’s website.

Three of the ten artists were asked to further refine their proposals for a second submission and members of the Arts Advisory Panel and Cultural Development Board unanimously recommended artist Morel Doucet. Mr. Doucet met numerous times with community members and presented his proposal concept at the Lola B. Walker Homeowners Association meeting, where it was enthusiastically embraced.

On August 7, the Arts Advisory Panel reviewed the revised proposal for “Secrets That the Wind Carries Away” and made a motion recommending approval of the artist to move forward with continued refinement of the final design.

On August 20, the Cultural Development Board reviewed the revised proposal for “Secrets That The Wind Carries Away” and made a motion accepting the recommendation of the Arts Advisory

Panel and recommending approval of the artist and concept to the City Commission.

About the artist:

Morel Doucet is a Haitian-born, Miami-based multidisciplinary artist and educator. His work utilizes ceramics, illustrations, and prints to discuss the impact of climate gentrification, migration, and displacement affecting Black communities in the African diaspora. Through a contemporary reconfiguration of the Black experience, his work catalogs a powerful record of environmental decay at the intersection of economic inequality, pollution, and policymaking.

Doucet's Emmy-nominated work has been featured and reviewed in numerous publications, including Vogue Mexico, The New York Times, Oxford University Press, Hyperallergic, PBS, and Ebony Magazine.

He graduated from the New World School of the Arts with the Distinguished Dean's Award for Ceramics. From there, he continued his education at the Maryland Institute College of Art, receiving his BFA in Ceramics with a minor in creative writing and a concentration in illustration.

Doucet's work is held in collections of the Pérez Art Museum Miami, the Tweed Museum of Art, the Museum of Contemporary Art North Miami, the Plymouth Box Museum, Petrucci Family Foundation Collection of African American Art, Microsoft, Facebook, and Royal Caribbean.

As an educator, Morel Doucet has taught at the Coral Gables Museum, the Perez Art Museum, and at the Lewis Arts Center in the MacFarlane Historical District.

About the artwork:

"Secrets That the Wind Carries Away" is presented as a striking piece of public art transcending time and space and paying tribute to the city's diverse cultural heritage, particularly honoring the contributions of Black and Bahamian immigrants who have played a vital role in shaping the community.

The sculpture features a majestic boat as its centerpiece, serving as a powerful metaphor for the journeys undertaken by countless Black immigrants across oceans in pursuit of a better life. It stands as a tangible symbol of resilience and determination, embodying the immigrant experience and the unwavering spirit of those who seek new beginnings. Surrounding the boat is a bed of flowers, symbolizing the seeds planted by the immigrant community in Coral Gables. Each blossom represents a unique story and contribution, reflecting the diversity and unity that characterizes the city's cultural landscape.

"Secrets That the Wind Carries Away" encourages viewers to reflect on the shared journey of humanity, recognizing the sacrifices and aspirations that unite us all. The title suggests the transient nature of the stories and secrets carried away by the wind, underscoring the importance of acknowledging and preserving the immigrant narratives that are integral to the city's collective identity.

This sculpture stands as a testament to Coral Gables' commitment to inclusivity and appreciation for its diverse heritage. It prompts both residents and visitors to pause and contemplate the

profound narratives that have shaped the city, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation for the rich history and contributions of Black immigrants in Coral Gables.

Recommended installation is within Merrick Park, across from City Hall, on the west end of the park. The proposed site does not conflict with current use of the park, including the park's annual holiday installations.

Funding for design, engineering, and fabrication is estimated at \$500,000. It is anticipated that the artwork will require a foundation that will be funded separately along with lighting, signage, additional sitework, landscaping, and outreach materials estimated at an additional estimated \$110,000. \$500,000 was previously approved and the additional \$110,000 is being proposed through the Art Fund.

The cost of annual maintenance will be assessed and may be proposed through use of the general fund as ordinary maintenance to be included as part of the City's annual public art maintenance plan.

The Arts Advisory Panel and the Cultural Development Board voted to recommend the proposed artwork concept by the Artist Morel Doucet at their respective meetings on August 7, 2024, and August 20, 2024.

ADVISORY BOARD/COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION(S):

Date.	Board/Committee	Comments
July 3, 2024	Arts Advisory Panel	Recommended with further direction to Artist: approval/denial vote: 7 to 0
July 16, 2024	Cultural Development Board	Recommended: approval/denial vote: 6 to 0
August 7, 2024	Arts Advisory Panel	Recommended: approval/denial vote: 6 to 0
August 20, 2024	Cultural Development Board	Recommended: approval/denial vote: 5 to 0

COMMISSION APPROVALS:

Date.	Board/Committee	Comments
September 13, 2023	City Commission	Res 2023-244

ATTACHMENT(S):

- 1. Draft Resolution**
- 2. Exhibit A**
- 3. Agreement DRAFT**
- 4. Excerpt Minutes from the Arts Advisory Panel meeting of July 3, 2024**

5. Excerpt Minutes from the Cultural Development Board meeting of July 16, 2024
6. Excerpt Minutes from the Arts Advisory Panel meeting of August 7, 2024
7. Excerpt Minutes from the Cultural Development Board meeting of August 20, 2024

FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

No.	Amount	Legislation	Account No.	Source of Funds
1.	\$530,000	Res 2023-244		Art in Public Places, Art Fund
2.	\$110,000			Art in Public Places, Art Fund
Total:	\$640,000			

Fiscal Impact:

One-time expense for the artwork and installation.
 The city's art fund will be used for this project.
 Minimal management to maintain specified plantings.

BUSINES IMPACT:

Addition to the city's public art collection.
 Promotion of the city through its public art program.
 Increase in visitors to the downtown business district.